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Transcript of Meeting

Date: January 29, 2020

Case: Perinatal Neonatal Quality Collaborative Pre-Application Conference

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MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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In Re: :
PERINATAL NEONATAL : PHPA 1029
QUALITY COLLABORATIVE : BPM017853

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Meeting
Baltimore, Maryland
Wednesday, January 29th, 2020
9:43 a.m.

Job No.: 285420
Pages: 1 - 22
Transcribed by: Debra McCostlin

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 MR. BRUCE: Good morning, everybody. I
3 would like to welcome you to the Perinatal and
4 Neonatal Quality Collaborative Pre-application
5 Conference. Thank you for, you know, bearing with
6 us while we get everything set up. Please be
7 advised the conference is being summarized in the
8 way of audio recording which will be posted after
9 the fact.

10 Okay. My name is Robert Bruce. I am
11 the procurement officer for this activity. What
12 we'll do just to get started is we'll go around
13 the room for introductions. Please state the name
14 of your organization and your name, and as well
15 just make sure you sign in on the sign-in sheets
16 and if you have a business card please leave one.
17 Okay. Go ahead. Please start.

18 MS. EVANS: Good morning. I'm Ellen
19 Evans with Qlarant and it's spelled
20 Q-L-A-R-A-N-T.

21 MS. EPKE: Hi. I'm Barbara Epke,
22 E-P-K-E, and I'm with the Maryland Patient Safety

1 Center.

2 MS. DIPETRO: Bonnie Dipetro, the
3 Maryland Patient Safety Center.

4 MR. BRUCE: My name is Robert Bruce.
5 I'm the chief operations officer for the
6 Prevention and Health Promotion Administration
7 and the procurement officer for this activity.

8 MS. MCFADDEN: My name is Courtney
9 McFadden. I'm the deputy director for the
10 Prevention and Health Promotion Administration
11 and also acting as the Maternal Child Health
12 Bureau director.

13 MS. TROXEL: Hi. I'm Alena Troxel, the
14 deputy director of the Maternal Child Health
15 Bureau.

16 MS. WILBURN: Hi. Colleen Wilburn,
17 Title V Program Manager.

18 MS. ALEXANDER: Linda Alexander, Acting
19 Medical Director, Maternal Child Health Bureau.

20 MS. BROCKMAN: Jennifer Brockman,
21 Health Quality Innovators.

22 MR. BRUCE: Thank you. So we're going

1 to start out today, I'm going to go over details
2 of the RFA and then I'll hand it over to the
3 program to go over the scope of work via
4 presentation. Okay. And then we will open the
5 floor to questions and answers.

6 So for the RFA, please carefully review
7 Section 1.1 of the RFA. The Maryland Department
8 of Health Maternal Child Health Bureau is issuing
9 a request for applications to administer the
10 Maryland's Prenatal Neonatal Quality
11 Collaborative.

12 The prenatal collaboratives are
13 networks of prenatal care providers and public
14 health professionals working to improve health
15 outcomes for women and newborns through
16 continuous quality improvement. The
17 collaborative provides participating birthing
18 hospitals with educational resources, technical
19 assistance, and a platform for communication in
20 sharing best practices.

21 The RFA and all subsequent
22 documentation regarding the solicitation will be

1 posted on eMaryland Marketplace Advantage.
2 Please remember that in order to receive an award
3 you as the vendor must be registered on eMaryland
4 Marketplace Advantage. Registration is free.
5 That is as well where we will be posting the
6 minutes for this meeting as well. So that will
7 automatically send it out to you.

8 Please carefully review subsection 1.6
9 regarding on how to submit questions subsequent
10 to this pre-application conference. Questions
11 are to be emailed to myself, Robert Bruce, and
12 the email address is listed on the key
13 information page on the summary sheet in the RFA
14 document. The procurement officer based on the
15 availability of time to research and communicate
16 an answer shall decide whether an answer can be
17 given before the application due date. So please
18 try to get your questions in as early as
19 possible.

20 The grant resulting from this
21 solicitation will be in effect from approximately
22 May the 18th of 2020 to June 30th of 2023.

1 Please keep in mind that all future years awards
2 in this document are subject to availability of
3 funding.

4 Section 2.1 states that there is no
5 applicant mandatory requirements for this RFA.

6 Section 3, scope of work, begins on page 7.

7 Carefully review this section to get a full
8 understanding of the requirements of the
9 solicitation, the procurement method for the
10 solicitation and its competitive sealed
11 applications.

12 Applicants are required to submit their
13 applications to this RFA in two parts. Section
14 4, application format, beginning on page 11
15 clearly lists all submission requirements. Your
16 applications must be submitted in separate
17 volumes. Volume one which is the project
18 narrative, separately sealed, and volume two,
19 budget justification, separately sealed. Do not
20 put your financial information in the same bind
21 with the project narrative.

22 Section 4.3 lists all documentation and

1 information required to be submitted with your
2 project narrative. The number of applications
3 required is one unbound original, three copies
4 and one PIA version for the Public Information
5 Act request. The PIA copy shall be redacted so
6 that confidential or proprietary information
7 should be removed and that is to protect the
8 information of your company. I would caution you
9 not to over redact your documents because they
10 are subject to an attorney review and if it's
11 over redacted the attorneys here will ask you to
12 redo that.

13 Please note that the grant shall not
14 become effective until it's been signed and
15 returned to the procurement office and an
16 official notification of award is given to you.

17 Section 4.4, volume two of the budget
18 narrative on page 12, please carefully review
19 this section. The number of copies for your
20 financial section is one unbound copy of the
21 original financial proposal which is Exhibit B.

22 Section 5, the evaluation and selection

1 process are outlined starting with subsection 5.1
2 which is on page 13. Your applications will be
3 evaluated by a committee organized for that
4 purpose and will be based on the criteria set
5 forth in the RFA. That criteria is listed in
6 descending order of importance and can be found
7 in subsection 5.2 on page 13.

8 The selection procedure is highlighted
9 in subsection 5.4 on page 14. As noted, the
10 grant will be awarded to the responsible offeror
11 that submitted the proposal that is determined to
12 be the most advantageous for the state
13 considering project evaluation factors and price
14 factors set forth in this RFA.

15 Other than comprising your applications
16 the most important matter is getting your
17 submission to us by the date and time listed in
18 the RFA. Your proposals are due no later than
19 February the 28th at 2:00 p.m. local time. The
20 address for the received proposals is listed on
21 the key information summary sheet on page 3. No
22 proposals will be accepted after 2:00 p.m. local

1 time.

2 Regardless of when you get your
3 proposal to me, whether it be tomorrow or
4 February the 28th, they are not opened until
5 after 2:00 on the 28th. Okay. So please don't
6 wait until the last minute. If you walk in at
7 2:01 with your submission it will not be
8 accepted.

9 Address your submissions as exactly to
10 the same address that's listed on the key
11 information sheet. The three acceptable means of
12 delivery of your applications are the U.S. Postal
13 Service, hand delivery by the offeror, please ask
14 for a receipt, as well as commercial carrier,
15 again please ask for a receipt. These are
16 detailed in subsection 1.7 where it talks about
17 application due time. Okay.

18 Again, if you have any questions or
19 comments about the procurement process you can
20 contact me. My name again is Robert Bruce. My
21 email is robert.bruce@maryland.gov and my
22 information as well is on the key information

1 sheet.

2 And I will now turn it over to Courtney
3 McFadden who will go over the scope of work in
4 the document.

5 MS. MCFADDEN: Good morning. So we'll
6 use the PowerPoint for this discussion. So we've
7 already done our introductions and, as Robert has
8 stated, a summary of the conference, you know,
9 questions and answers that we provide today will
10 be posted on eMaryland Marketplace Advantage.

11 So just some background about Maryland
12 maternal infant mortality. Maryland's maternal
13 mortality rate decreased by 7.6 percent during
14 the period of 2012 to 2016 but remains above the
15 Healthy People 2020 objective of 11.4 maternal
16 deaths per 100,000 live births.

17 In Maryland there's a large discrepancy
18 between maternal mortality rates among black and
19 white women. Compared to the 2000 to 2011
20 period, the 2012 to 2016 white MMR in Maryland
21 decreased by 34.6 percent and the black MMR
22 increased by 20.5 percent. That 2012 to 2016

1 period shows the black MMR is 3.7 times the white
2 MMR. So this is a racial disparity that we
3 continue to try to address in the state and
4 through -- one of the strategies is by the
5 perinatal collaborative.

6 Maryland's infant mortality rate is 6.4
7 per 1,000 live births and is 10 percent higher
8 than the U.S. average rate of 5.8 deaths, and
9 you'll see some leading causes of preterm birth
10 there and below. The most leading cause
11 (inaudible).

12 Okay. So the funding opportunity, so
13 as we stated, collaboratives are networks of
14 perinatal care providers and public health
15 professionals working to improve health outcomes
16 for women and newborns through continuous quality
17 improvement. The collaborative provides
18 participating birthing hospitals with educational
19 resources, technical assistance, and a platform
20 for communication in sharing those practices.
21 There are 32 birthing hospitals in the state so
22 we would like the collaborative to engage all 32

1 birthing hospitals.

2 There is a resource in the RFA from the
3 CDC. There's a link to a resource which gives a
4 lot of -- a wealth of information about
5 administering or creating perinatal
6 collaboratives. And also there's examples of
7 state -- other state collaboratives on that link
8 that you can access from that.

9 So as Robert stated, you'll want to
10 read through the RFA document including all of
11 the attachments very carefully and you'll want to
12 make sure you understand the program standards to
13 help you put forward a successful application.

14 We'll be accepting questions via email
15 February 20th through February 21st and then the
16 application deadline was stated as February 28th
17 at 2:00. The anticipated first award start date
18 would be May 18th. So that's in the State Fiscal
19 Year '20 which is the one that we're currently
20 in. So that award period will go from May 18th
21 to June 30th and then we'll have three subsequent
22 fiscal year award periods.

1 So State Fiscal Year '21 is next there,
2 July 1st, 2020 to June 30, 2021. State Fiscal
3 Year '22 is next and then State Fiscal 2023 is
4 the last one. So three full state fiscal years
5 and a prorated part of state -- the current
6 fiscal year.

7 As I said, we have 32 birthing
8 hospitals in the state so we want to impact 100
9 percent of the births through this work.
10 Approximately every two years the collaborative
11 selects and implements and collects data on one
12 QI initiative that's related to obstetric care
13 and one QI initiative that's related to neonatal
14 care and so the collaborative would be
15 responsible for administering this selection of
16 the initiatives and then carrying that out.

17 So I'm not going to read through this
18 whole thing, but these are the main objectives
19 and they should be addressed in the narrative and
20 the work plan. But the main objective provides
21 staff to support and you'll see the activities
22 that are required there. The second one is

1 consultation with the Department to support the
2 work of the collaborative to carry out hospital
3 based QI, quality improvement initiatives and
4 you'll see the activities there. Objective
5 three, communicate progress of the collaborative
6 initiatives to the Department and you'll see
7 those there.

8 I just want to pay -- just draw your
9 attention to 3(d) there, developing and adhering
10 to an evaluation plan and report on performance
11 measures, and so we want to make sure there's a
12 concerted effort for the collaboratives to have
13 an evaluation plan and have some quantifiable or
14 qualitative performance measures that we'll be
15 reporting on. You can also base on any
16 initiatives that you -- you could also think
17 about long-term outcomes or intermediate outcomes
18 as a part of that evaluation plan.

19 So the funding periods and award
20 amounts. So we talked about the funding periods,
21 but this first State Fiscal Year '20, the first
22 funding period is a prorated amount of \$30,000

1 and then the next three state fiscal years is an
2 award amount of \$225,000 each fiscal year. Of
3 course all future years awards are subject to
4 availability and funding.

5 So your application components, there
6 is a narrative application that there's a
7 template that is provided for you to use. So
8 some of it is free text that you'll be typing in
9 and some of it you kind of click and type in and
10 there's also a transmittal letter that's required
11 based on the RFA language. There's also
12 Attachment 2. There's a work plan so you want to
13 use Attachment C that you see attached to the RFA
14 for your work plan. You'll want to complete a
15 work plan for each project period.

16 Attachment 3 are the budget forms and
17 in the RFA those are Exhibits B and C. So
18 there's a budget form itself and then there's a
19 budget narrative. So the budget form is more of
20 a line item detail of the line item costs that
21 you'll see you'll need and to support that and
22 will include salaries, supplies, any

1 subcontracts.

2 And then the budget narrative provides
3 the narrative justification to support those
4 costs. What is the description of the staff that
5 you're supporting? What is the description of
6 any subawards that you'll be making? And then of
7 course also attach relevant staff resumes.

8 Okay. At this point we'll take any
9 questions that you might have.

10 MS. EVANS: I have a question.

11 MS. MCFADDEN: Yes.

12 MS. EVANS: So for the two quality
13 improvement projects that will be initiated each
14 year, as part of the offerors proposal are they
15 meant to identify the substance of those or those
16 be decided by the steering committees after?

17 MS. MCFADDEN: Those will be decided by
18 the steering committee. I think your -- just
19 your application would describe how you will
20 convene that process.

21 MS. EVANS: Thank you.

22 MS. MCFADDEN: Yes?

1 MS. BROCKMAN: Is the narrative limited
2 to the space provided on Attachment B?

3 MS. MCFADDEN: No.

4 MS. BROCKMAN: Okay. Great. Thank
5 you. Is there a page limit?

6 MS. MCFADDEN: We did not specify a
7 page limit.

8 MS. BROCKMAN: Can you share anything
9 about how the technical and budget proposal
10 evaluations are weighed? Are they given equal
11 importance or is one more important than the
12 other?

13 MR. BRUCE: So that's in the RFA
14 document.

15 MS. BROCKMAN: Okay.

16 MR. BRUCE: Is that they are weighted
17 equally.

18 MS. BROCKMAN: All right.

19 MS. EVANS: I'll ask a silly question
20 just regarding -- it's sort of following up on
21 the limit and just using the template. So
22 obviously we are not constrained by the box.

1 MS. MCFADDEN: No.

2 MS. EVANS: We can go as many pages as
3 possible.

4 MS. MCFADDEN: You can, yes.

5 MS. EVANS: Okay. Great. I figured as
6 much but --

7 MS. MCFADDEN: Yes.

8 MS. EVANS: For those of us who like to
9 color inside the lines, good to know.

10 MS. MCFADDEN: I get it. Any other
11 questions?

12 MS. DIPETRO: I just have like an
13 application question. So if we chose to hand
14 deliver we would deliver to you?

15 MR. BRUCE: There is a room number in
16 the RFA.

17 MS. DIPETRO: Okay.

18 MR. BRUCE: There are two secretaries
19 outside of my office that will give you a
20 handwritten receipt.

21 MS. DIPETRO: Okay.

22 MR. BRUCE: So the same thing they

1 would do for a courier.

2 MS. DIPETRO: So like if you're in a
3 meeting --

4 MR. BRUCE: Uh-huh. There are people -
5 -

6 MS. DIPETRO: -- delivering to them is
7 okay. Got you.

8 MR. BRUCE: You can also, again, UPS,
9 FedEx. Those things are also fine because they
10 are delivered to the mailroom for the Department
11 and timestamped.

12 MS. DIPETRO: All right.

13 MR. BRUCE: so those are also
14 acceptable. Okay. It's just the -- I caution on
15 hand delivering just because the building is a
16 maze.

17 MS. DIPETRO: Yes.

18 MR. BRUCE: Okay. So again, I have had
19 many times where people are running down the
20 hallway at 1:59 running for the office door. So
21 just be careful.

22 MS. DIPETRO: Okay.

1 MR. BRUCE: Okay. So just make sure
2 you get it in. That's why we made the due times
3 earlier. The due time is 2:00 is because there
4 are people present in the building to accept your
5 application. Because also we've had times where
6 carriers show up and don't have IDs and can't get
7 past the security. So that's also a concern.

8 MS. MCFADDEN: Any other questions?

9 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Your posting was
10 very thorough.

11 MS. MCFADDEN: Oh, thank you.
12 (Inaudible).

13 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: I don't have a
14 question now but I appreciate that you'll be
15 taking questions through the 21st.

16 MS. MCFADDEN: Yes.

17 MR. BRUCE: Yes.

18 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: But again, it
19 was very thorough so thank you for that and I
20 think you're highlighting certain areas for
21 emphasis was also helpful, but there may be
22 questions later.

1 MR. BRUCE: Okay. And again, if we get
2 questions what we would do is give them to the
3 program to answer and we will post those
4 electronically on the (inaudible). So --

5 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Great.

6 MR. BRUCE: We'll also post a copy of
7 the presentation.

8 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Great.

9 MR. BRUCE: Well, if that's the end of
10 the questions then thank you very much. We
11 hope -- we look forward to your applications and
12 your questions if you have any.

13 VOICES: Thank you.

14 (End of audio.)

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CERTIFICATE OF TRANSCRIBER

I, DEBRA MCCOSTLIN, do hereby certify
that the foregoing transcript is a true and
correct record of the recorded proceedings; that
said proceedings were transcribed to the best of
my ability from the audio recording and
supporting information; and that I am neither
counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of
the parties to this case and have no interest,
financial or otherwise, in its outcome.

Debra McCostlin

DEBRA MCCOSTLIN

FEBRUARY 5, 2020

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